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Enter If You Dare: Trick-or-Treat in Res Halls

Lauren Hughes
MU Media Relations

Manchester University students are hosting All-Hall Trick-or-Treat for local children on Wednesday, Oct. 28.

The annual free Halloween treat is from 6-8 p.m. in all six of the North Manchester campus residence halls. Children of all ages are invited, but all must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

The best route for candy collecting, giggles and boos is to begin at Schwalm Hall on the west side of campus, then to Helman and Oakwood halls, East Street Apartments, then to the east side at East Hall and, if you dare, Garver Hall.

The spooky tour starts with Schwalm Hall on Wayne Street celebrating Halloween Around the World. Afterwards, visit Helman Hall and Oakwood Hall on College Avenue for trick-or-treating, along with a door decorating contest judged by the trick-or-treaters.

If there is still room in your basket, (and you're brave enough) make your way to East Hall on East Street for trick-or-treat and Wing Wars, where each wing competes to see which can best carry out its theme.

Haunted Garver Hall, on East Street, aims to frighten. This residence hall is so spooky that it may not be appropriate for children younger than 10.

Finally, residents of East Street Apartments will have trick-or-treating and a Halloween game for children.

MU students also are volunteering at the Halloween Haunted Police/Fire Station from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 31 during the North Manchester community trick-or-treat.



Senior Rissa Loc serves North Manchester locals at a monthly Zion Lutheran Church community dinner.

Students Dish Up Service

Erin Fralick
Staff Writer

The sound of friendly chatter and clamoring plates fills the room as eager families await their meals. It's the bimonthly community dinner, hosted at Zion Lutheran Church, served up by 10 Manchester University students and other volunteers every second and fourth Tuesday during the school year.

The community dinner is an excellent way for Manchester students to connect with members of the community, said Carole Miller-Patrick, director of service opportunities.

The dinner has served 80 to 100 people from varying backgrounds. Some are homeless, handicapped, single parents, elderly, military families or just people from the community who want a meal and conversation.

While the dinner dishes out food for empty stomachs, the students serve up a sense of value. Miller-Patrick recalls a woman who looked at a student that others may have judged for his poor appearance and said, "God loves him so much for giving his time." She also tells of international students who have brought gifts from their homelands to give to people they have met through the community dinner.

Manchester provides more than students for the dinners. The University also provides books, milk and food for families to take home. Upon hearing that Manchester University donates books to children at the community dinner,

Better World Books donated eight 900-pound boxes of books for the children to keep.

Judith Gump is in charge of the community dinner on the church front. The program used to be a government-sponsored commodities program, but four years ago, the North Manchester Fellowship of Churches rose to the chal-

lenge and sponsored the dinner.

Gump has been volunteering since childhood, and encourages students to do the same. "The MU students are a fantastic addition to our mission," she said. "They provide much-needed help with serving meals but also provide a social element for the participants."

Eager to Volunteer? Opportunities Await

Caitlin Doyle
Staff Writer

"My humanity is tied to my neighbor's humanity," says junior Lucas Al-Zoughbi, a psychology and peace studies major who is student director for MU's Center for Volunteer Opportunities. "So if my neighbor is suffering, then I cannot be happy ... I cannot be complete, I cannot be whole..."

His opinion is not rare at Manchester, where service is integral to its Mission to graduate "persons of ability and conviction who draw upon their education and faith to lead principled, productive and compassionate lives that improve the human condition."

MU students, faculty and staff annually commit more than 40,000 hours of service, consistently placing Manchester on the President's Higher Education Community Service "Honor Roll."

If a student is looking to help others, Al-Zoughbi and

Volunteer Services Director Carol Miller-Patrick can help. There are lots of opportunities, she says. Many students visit the office on the first floor of Calvin Ulrey Hall with a vague idea of how they want to volunteer. They guide them to an opportunity that encompasses that idea and lets it grow.

One way is through working with youngsters. The University's chapter of Indiana Reading Corps is one of the largest in the state, logging more than 3,000 hours annually tutoring elementary school children.

At Manchester, many classes require volunteer service. However, many other students discover on their own that volunteers can be a remarkable and fulfilling experience, Miller-Patrick said.

Al-Zoughbi, a native of Palestine, enjoys the connections he makes with people off campus and in the North Manchester community.

SEE SERVICE, PAGE 2

To Chegg or Not: Can the Bookstore Compete?

Karen Kanyike
Staff Writer

Prior to the beginning of each semester, every student is focused on textbooks, especially how much they cost and where to get them. The Campus Store provides more than 5,000 textbooks each semester.

The more expensive textbooks are needed for courses in biology, chemistry and accounting. Prices on the new science books range from \$200 to \$300. The cheaper books are for English courses; those cost between \$7 and \$25 on average.

"Science publishers charge more because a lot of research goes into making the books and also many people are involved in publishing them" said Jennifer Fansler, MU Campus Store textbook buyer/retail clerk. "The English books are cheaper because they are small-trade books."

Because of the high costs, most students, especially science majors, tend to buy their books from alternative sources, including high-volume online retailers such as Amazon.

"I almost always buy my books from Amazon because the book costs fall within my price range," said Curtis Stump, a sophomore pre-pharmacy major from Boggstown, Indiana. Stump bought his first edition *Organic Chemistry* text from Amazon for \$21.05. The campus store was selling the same books used at \$204 and new ones at \$272, he said.

"I usually buy or rent my books from Chegg (another online bookstore) because it is more affordable for me," said sophomore education major Carla Ross of Denver, Indiana. "But sometimes I buy books from the Campus Store if I cannot find them anywhere else and also if the price fits with my budget." Chegg listed Ross' psychology textbook at \$92.99; the Campus Store was pricing the new psychology book for \$105.35 and the used one for \$79.

Chegg lists more than 9,000 textbooks, claiming to save students more than 90 percent on some purchases. It offers a 21-day return policy for students who drop the class that requires the textbook. "Over 75 percent of our stock every semester consists of used books," Fansler said.

SEE BOOKS, PAGE 2

Manchester to Honor Peace Activist Jane Addams

Lauren Hughes
MU Media Relations

Manchester University Peace Studies Institute and its Conflict Resolution program will dedicate a plaque honoring peace and justice activist Jane Addams during Homecoming this Saturday, Oct. 24.

The ceremony begins at 3 p.m. in Gladdys Muir Peace Garden on the southwest corner of the North Manchester campus.

An innovator in social work and the second woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, Addams founded the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and Hull House in Chicago, where she worked for 46 years to help the poor and stop the use of children as industrial laborers.

Manchester peace studies and social work faculty will speak briefly about Addams' influence and inspiration.

A reception will follow the dedication of the plaque, which joins the Peacemakers Wall in the Peace Garden.



Manny the Mascot Debuts

Guerby Ruuska
Staff Writer

Spartacus, MU's most recent mascot, hung up his helmet last Thursday at Prime Time at the PERC as the new mascot, Manny, was finally revealed.

After an introduction of both basketball teams, Manny sprinted to the center of the gym. The crowd was initially silent before cheers and whistles erupted for Manny. The new mascot boasts

softer features while baring defined muscles in his chest and 6-pack, topped with a helmet resembling MU's new logo.

"Manny actually looks like a Spartan and Spartacus looked more like a mascot," said Robby Davis, sophomore education and history major. "I was excited seeing Manny, but I think the name could be better. ... The look of Manny is spot on."

From MU Today: Manny will appear at most home sporting events and, of course,

Homecoming and Family Weekend. But he isn't just about athletics. Manny plans to promote MU at a range of events on our campuses and in the community.

If you want Manny to make an appearance at your event, please contact Tammy at tbarber@manchester.edu or 260-982-5464. A mascot calendar and reservation form will soon be on the website.

Tammy Barber, administrative associate to Adam Hohman, assistant vice president of enrollment and marketing

Two Bikes, 50 Days, 50K Miles

Aaron Lloyd
Staff Writer

Riding a bike for a couple of miles is tough for most everyday people. How about 100 miles a day for 50 straight days in all 50 states? That is what MU peace studies major Michael Himlie and his friend, David Jones are doing this upcoming summer to raise funds and awareness for Christian Peacemakers Team, which works around the world to promote peace and love instead of violence and war.

Fifty Centuries in Fifty States in Fifty Consecutive Days

surfaced as a goal for 22-year-old Himlie and his new 60-year-old Arizona pal last December on a Christian Peacemakers Team initiative in Palestine and Israel. They hope to raise \$100,000 for the international organization that builds partnerships to transform violence and oppression.

Himlie has marked out their route across each state on a map that hangs above his two bicycles in his East Hall room.

Their journey begins this spring in Hawaii on May 14 as they ride the same 100-mile path as Ironman competitors. Then, they fly to Los Angeles, and start biking

from there. The two of them will wrap up their expedition in Anchorage, Alaska on July 2 – exactly 50 days after their much warmer island start.

On day 37, June 19, Himlie and Jones will pedal Indiana, including riding around North Manchester until reaching their 100th mile for this state.

During their journey, the two bicyclists will travel uphill for almost 200,000 feet and 5,000 total miles across the country.

Volunteers accompany the men in dangerous environments and drive them to host families at the end of each day. Along their journey, they will visit a church in each state to speak about what CPT and seek donations for the organization.

Himlie gained motivation from his parents, who often told him, “If you can visualize, you can do it” as he was growing up. Those words came back to Himlie last year, when he dropped out of McPherson College to work with Brethren Disaster Ministries. He then went over to Palestine and Israel to help promote non-violence with Christian Peacemakers Team.

Himlie, of Harmony, Minn., transferred to Manchester last spring and hopes to graduate in spring 2017.

The trip has a website called bikingforpeace.org. Businesses also can donate money for the trip itself, which costs about \$15,000 for transportation and living arrangements.



Photo by Savannah Riley
Sophomore Michael Himlie plans his 50K journey for Christian Peacemakers.



Professor Shane Thomson incorporates his worldly experiences into lessons

Globetrotting Teacher Scripts His Own Style

Kevin Hawley
Staff Writer

Shane Thomson: globetrotter, language master and visiting instructor of Spanish, German and even an English class scripting a different style of educating his students.

Enthusiastically striding through the door to a small class of seven or eight students, a smile stretches across his face. From waving his hands like a choir director leading his musicians, Thomson mesmerizes his students, to the use of different colored markers on the board drawing dorky pictures to recalling words – his teaching style is a touch...different.

Thomson's route to teaching at Manchester has taken unique twists and turns rich with some lucky encounters. He almost stumbled into opportunities with other cultures and languages. His efforts in business and education that led to humanitarian work.

On a mission to Spain he learned Spanish on the streets, picking up accents quickly. While helping some French Africans he began to develop his French skills. A trip to Austria taught him Ger-

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One of the results of these connections is that he hopes to talk to a youth group about the Holy Land and Israeli occupation and its impact on his faith.

Office of Volunteer Service student workers get to see students in action. Merykokeb Belay, a junior biology major, knows a great deal about the programs, including the computer room MU students use for Skype tutoring and the OVS library that is filled with books that can be used to help study or be given away to children who need them.

Skype tutoring is becoming more popular, Belay said. Manchester students help students without many reasons to stay in school find the ambition to reach for a seemingly unattainable education.

man, where he drove an ice cream truck while his wife was a nanny.

How long does it take to learn a language? “At what point do you actually know a language?” was his quick response, but admitted fluency is the key. To become fluent it may only take a few semesters, or even less. This requires, “being able to participate in a conversation without interrupting the flow searching for the right word, tense or conjugation. You may not be 100 percent correct, but you can be understood and can understand what is going on.”

The first time Professor Thomson was asked to teach was for Huntington North High School, after he ran into the head of the foreign language department at the grocery store. Suddenly, he was teaching both Spanish and French. “I tried to teach the way I learned, keeping things comfortable, playful and a little rowdy,” he said.

The smile never leaves throughout the class, even when students protested he was going too fast. Without putting an errant student, he put on a positive spin before fixing it.

He asked “Am I going too fast?” instead of “Did you not get it?” He is positive, “so students don't shut down to you.”

BOOKS, FROM PAGE 1

“Looking for used books is a lengthy process but in the long run, it's better for the students, better for the school and better for the store. It is worth the time and effort.”

The main suppliers of books for the Campus Store include textbook giants Follett and Nebraska Book Company, she said.

The Campus Store sells books at the publisher's price and they also compare prices with other small private colleges to determine the prices of books, she said. Despite the cost of books at the MU store, more than half of the students buy at least one book from the Campus Store, she said.

Spartans Travel to Ethiopia, Egypt

Carly Kwiecien
Staff Writer

Two classes are Egypt- and Ethiopia-bound this January session; Professor Justin Lasser's Rethinking God: Reality of the Virtual class and Professor Mary Lahman's Language and Thought.

Students will visit historical landmarks and learn about different theologies within Egypt and Ethiopia, Lasser said.

“Egypt is particularly related to the question of God,” said the assistant professor of religious studies. “This was the most important Christian region in the first five centuries of the church. Students will study the mystical theologies of the great ascetic cave-dwellers and

begin to think of theology as an experiential phenomenon rather than as an intellectual pursuit.”

Students will be exposed to the great Coptic Orthodox tradition as well as the Jewish and Muslim contemplative traditions in Alexandria and Cairo, he added. “Beyond the Abrahamic traditions, students will learn about the ancient Egyptian search for God in their three millennia before the Common Era (i.e., before Christ).”

The itinerary includes the Hanging Church, a Nile cruise and snorkeling in the Red Sea. Along the way, students will explore different communication techniques, said Lahman, professor of communication studies.

“Students will explore more appropriate language behav-

iors to delay evaluation (automatic responses) in their interactions with diverse others,” she said. “By learning to delay evaluation, students gain awareness of their perceptions and emotional responses, which increases their skills in civil discourse on contentious topics, such as ageism in healthcare, sex-based discrimination, and equal pay debates.”

The two seemingly different classes travelling together bring excitement about the trip for the prospective students and the two professors.

“Professor Lahman and I are excited to not only teach together, but to consider how language relates to both the world and religious experience,” Lasser said. “We are tempted to call our two courses ‘Language & God.’ This provides us the occasion to learn from each other, and we are convinced it will be great for students to both witness this dialogue and participate in it.”

This course enables MU students to fulfill different portions of the CORE program with two courses, said Lasser. “First- and second-year students are encouraged to take Language and Thought course and juniors and seniors are encouraged to take the Rethinking God critical connections course.” Students may register for the trip from Oct. 29 to Nov. 6.



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56 on Death Row Have MU Pen Pals

Emily Barrand
Co-Editor

Hand-writing a letter is uncommon these days. Hand-writing letters to death-row inmates is even less common. Yet, more than 40 Manchester University students are writing letters to 56 inmates facing death sentences.

Based a few miles from campus in Liberty Mills, the Death Row Support Project of the Church of the Brethren "facilitates pen pal relationships between those on death row and those on the outside," according to its website.

Project Director Rachel Gross asked MU sophomore Anika Harley of Madison, Wisc., to begin the program at Manchester. Harley, a social work and peace studies major with minors in Spanish and gender studies, is a member of the Church of the Brethren.

Prisoners on death row spend as many as 23 hours alone each day. Often, even their families stop corresponding with them. The program gives inmates an outlet to what is occurring beyond the prison walls.



Photo by Savannah Riley
First-year Andrea Brewster taking part in the Project

What do students write about? Sports, TV shows and books, or just the daily life of a college student. Harley has been writing to her pen pal for a little over eight months. "He tells me a lot about the prison system and how he is treated," she said. "He has also sent me some of his art and I've sent him photos I took on some of my travels."

Stacy Erickson-Pesetski, associate dean for academic resources and associate professor of English, is teaching a first-year seminar this semester at Manchester called "Orange is Not the New Black," inspired by her sabbatical work last year at Pendleton Correctional Facility.

Erickson-Pesetski suggested her students participate in the Death Row Support Project to help them connect course material to the real world. "This isn't from a book; these are real prisoners," she said. "They still need human contact. They deserve some humanity."

Although participating is optional, 17 of Erickson-Pesetski's 19 students in the seminar have committed to writing inmate pen pals for one year.

Students do not seal their letters until someone in the MU Center for Service Opportunities has reviewed them. "It's not that we don't trust our students; we read them over to make sure that the correspondence is safe," said Carole Miller-Patrick, Center director.

No one edits the letters or tells students not to ask certain questions, she said. "We're just safeguarding" the students' privacy, she said. The prisoners' letters to MU students are not screened, she said.

"The students share what they get back openly," Miller-Patrick added. "We bring them together a couple of times a year to discuss what it's like and what kind of letters they are getting."

For details on how to participate in the MU prison pen pals program, visit the Center for Service Opportunities in Calvin Ulrey Hall to read letters from eligible inmates. Non-MU students may sign up at www.brethren.org/drsp/.



Bob Wieland encouraged students to live up to their full potential at the Oct. 8 VIA.

Wieland: "It's Too Soon To Quit"

Sarah Farnam
Staff Writer

On Oct. 8, Vietnam veteran Bob Wieland touched the hearts of hundreds of Manchester University students who gathered to hear his story in Cordier Auditorium. In 1969, Wieland lost both his legs when hit by a mortar mine. Although he was declared dead, he awoke a half-hour later and has not stopped accomplishing unbelievable feats since.

For several years, Wieland trained to run marathons, eventually building himself up to walk across the country on his hands from 1982 to 1986. Despite his hardships, Wieland has starred in a TV show, worked as a strength coach for the Green Bay Packers and shattered world records.

He continues to inspire now by touring as a motivational speaker. Although Wieland speaks at a variety of venues and to a variety of audiences, college students have a special place in his heart.

"I like to think I can still

relate to college students," he told The Oak Leaves. "I think I'm pretty hip. I can rap." B-Dub (Wieland's rap-name) said speaking with college students keeps him young.

He rolled out onto the Cordier stage wearing a bright gold Spartans T-shirt. "Living is the best way to celebrate life," he told the audience. "Don't ever let somebody else goof up your dream," he shouted, and then repeated it. He called upon the Manchester University community, asking that each of us hold ourselves accountable for achieving our own dreams.

"Let's go out into society together, and make sure our dreams come true."

"No matter the age, everybody needs inspiration," he told The Oak Leaves. In fact, he said college students may need it more than other age groups.

Wieland reported that 70 percent of Americans are unhappy in their careers. He said he hopes to reach out to college students before they become a part of this statistic. "As many of these college grads

are becoming ready to be a part of America's work force, it is important for them to choose a position that they absolutely love."

He pointed out that money is nice, but stressed that happiness in what you decide to do is key.

Wieland's advice for how to stick with what you love is to not hold back. "I always go for it," he said, "I don't have any boring days." He noted that his current career is fairly straightforward: "I get paid for talking."

There are additional reasons why Wieland says young people need words of encouragement. A lot of young people are committing suicide, he said, and he hopes his story will inspire them to keep going.

"Always remember that it's too soon to quit," he said. "You never know (what's going to happen)." As proof, Wieland added that, even after losing his legs and landing in a wheelchair, he married a beautiful fashion model who looks past his disability. "B-dub got a second chance!" he said with a grin.



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SPARTAN SPORTS



Photo by Guerby Ruuska
Diver Jennifer Swan

First-Year Dives Solo at 1st MU Swim Meet

Guerby Ruuska
Staff Writer

First-year Jennifer Swan single-handedly represented Manchester at its first diving meet in Granville, Ohio.

While her teammates were swimming and competing at Kenyon College, Swan and her diving coach, Nicola Jones '15, traveled to Denison University for the diving competition. Swan scored 149.45 points for the Spartans, placing her eighth out of 14 female divers.

"It was very exciting diving in the meet because of the new environment and it was a lot to take in being the only Spartan there," Swan, of Yorktown, Indiana, said. "But I knew that I prepared well and that I gave it my all to do good for the team."

"The first meet was all about having fun and getting a feel for what college diving is like," Jones said. "Jen did very well for the first meet of the year."

Swan is showing major strides early on. Last year, in her first meet, she was scoring 100s.

"This is a huge improvement and helps set a standard for the next meet," Jones said.

The Spartans travel to Terre Haute today to take on Wabash College and Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology.

"I'm hoping to improve the little things I messed up on at Denison and throw more difficult dives," Swan said.

Jones said: "Some things to work on for the future are more technique-based. She (Swan) has amazing talent. I can't wait to see how she finishes out the season."

MU Tops Defiance, 42-21

Kody Smith
Staff Writer

Manchester Spartans entered fall break with a bang, toppling the Defiance Yellow Jackets 42-21 on their home turf on Oct. 10. The Spartans now are 3-2 overall on the season, with a 3-1 record in the Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference.

At Defiance, Manchester was fueled by an offensive attack that produced early and often, securing a 35-7 lead by halftime. Junior wide receiver Dakota Nelson put on an offensive display that earned him HCAC Player of the Week honors.

Still burning from its 42-0 defeat Oct. 3 against Franklin College, the Spartan offense fired back with a vengeance at Defiance, putting seven points on the board

within the first three minutes of action.

Senior quarterback Logan Haston completed a 60-yard touchdown pass to Dakota Nelson to spark Spartan scoring.

"Our guys responded well after the Franklin loss," said Head Coach Shannon Griffith. "It was a character test and we passed with flying colors." The highlight of the game for the Spartans was the play of the team siblings, Dakota Nelson and first-year defensive back Dillon Nelson.

Dakota notched over 250 all-purpose yards. Nelson reeled in seven passes from Logan Haston for 115 yards, including a 60-yard touchdown to start the scoring.

Nelson compiled nearly 150 kick and punt return yards, including 65-yard punt return for a

touchdown in the second quarter. On the defensive, Dillon Nelson intercepted two Defiance passes, his fourth and fifth interceptions on the year. His five interceptions lead the HCAC conference.

Logan Haston continued his consistency passing the ball, completing 20 of 27 for 283 yards and two touchdowns, plus a rushing touchdown. Haston has now passed for more than 1,000 yards in his second consecutive season. He also leads the HCAC in pass completion percentage, completing 69.2 percent.

"Logan is a model student athlete who represents our school and football program in a first-class manner," Coach Griffith said. "He has been very consistent and is managing the offense effectively."



MU head wrestling coach, Kevin Lake '98

New Coach No Stranger to Service, Manchester

Manchester 1998 graduate Kevin Lake is the Spartans' new head wrestling coach.

At Manchester, Lake wrestled as a 126/133-pounder, under the guidance of legendary Coach Tom Jarman. His team placed in the Top Ten of the NCAA Division III National Championships three of his four years at Manchester. It was then he solidified his passion for wrestling and for doing his part to make the world a better place.

"It was in October of my freshman year," he reminisced for a 2014 MU story. "Coach Jarman had a preseason workout scheduled for us. I figured we would be running and doing conditioning."

"We didn't practice at all though," he added. "We helped a family in need move to a new location in town. I'd never had an experience like that. It's stuck with me in everything I do."

Lake earned a master's degree in sport administration at Central Michigan University and coached Division I teams at Princeton University, Central Michigan, MacMurray College, South Dakota State University and Fresno State University.

He recently served as Los Angeles program director for Beat the Streets, a nonprofit organization that cultivates youth development in underserved communities through a wrestling program.

Lake replaces Matt Burlingame, who left Manchester this fall to coach wrestling and teach biology for Whitko High School.



Photo by Savannah Riley

Senior quarterback Logan Haston and sophomore running back Hunter Hardee run the ball at the Oct. 10 game.

Fans Set Up Volleyball Squad

Tanner Forsythe
Staff Writer

As the crowds grow at the Manchester women's volleyball matches, so do their wins.

The team gets great support from the Spartan faithful as the home games create a thriving environment for the team.

"The crowd has been very energetic and has really gotten us excited to play here at home," said first-year Farren Miller.

Volleyball isn't the most popular sport on campus, so student support and fans attending and getting excited at the games has actually swayed the matches in favor of the Spartans, she said.

The Spartans have knotted an 8-14 record, an increase of three wins already this season with just a few more matches left on the calendar. Head Coach Bryndon Paulsen is in his second Spartan year.

The volleyball Spartans are relying heavily on leadership, with six seniors and a few more juniors who are taking the younger players under their wings and really showing them what needs to be done during practice and how that translates over to the matches. Those younger players are making an impact, too. The team normally starts two or three first-years each

match and four or five will see action throughout the match.

The road also is affecting the scoring. Of their 22 matches this season, only four have been on campus.

The last four games of the season are all at home this year, so that should really give a boost to the team as long as they keep receiving the crowd support.



Photo by Savannah Riley

The Manchester volleyball team hypes up growing crowds before a meet.

No. 1 Smith Serves Mind Game

Stratton Smith
Staff Writer

As the bass of the music flows through my body, each step awakens my focus for what is bound to happen in just minutes. It's Tennis Match Day. For me, and lots of college-level tennis players, the match starts before any point is played.

The match starts in the lineup introduction, when I shake my opponent's hand. I eye him up and down and quickly make generalizations that will help me solve the puzzle of defeating him. His shoes, height, weight, handshake and body language all reveal so much. I may not look like much of a physical threat, but mentally ... I'm terrifying.

I come from a high school tennis program - New Palestine High School - that was expected to win sectionals every year. We were that good. I was never the most-talented player, but I loved the game and was blessed that I could further

my court career at Manchester University.

After hard work that summer and through my first year of college, I sought respect not only among my teammates, but throughout the HCAC conference.

I played No. 1 singles and No. 1 doubles my freshman year and was the singles wins leader, too, but our team didn't make the conference tournament yet again. I knew if I was going to be a leader to this team, we had to be better. The next year, we made that tournament and Coach said we were the best men's team in a decade. Again, I made it a priority to be the singles wins leader, respectful of the knowledge that some of my teammates are borderline superheroes on the court.

Rarely would I say I'm the most-talented player in a tourney -- I have so much respect for the other No. 1 singles players in our conference. Luckily in tennis, just because you're the better player doesn't mean you're going to win.

You're going to have to work for it.

Mentally, I come prepared. I may not be pulling a rabbit out of my hat, but maybe a drop shot, a slick forehand, or the occasional "tweener."

The "Place Behind the Pines" (the courts) is my Manchester home, where I truly wear my emotions on my sleeve. When I'm cheerful, I'll joyfully scream out "Let's go!" When I'm angry or frustrated, I have no problem reaching the peak of my voice so the whole town of North Manchester can hear my roar.

Tennis has always been there for me through thick and thin, and I'm blessed that I can put on a Spartan uniform every fall and spring. I'm blessed and humbled serving as our team's top-ranked player for the upcoming season this spring. I never promise wins for the visitors coming to watch (superstition), but I'll always promise a good show. Be sure to bring your ear plugs, though. It's going to be a loud season.



"The 'Place Behind the Pines' (the courts) is my Manchester home, where I truly wear my emotions on my sleeve."